

Touchpaper

MARCH 1992

Number 1

the waltham abbey newsletter

Welcome to this first issue of the newsletter which I hope to publish quarterly. The purpose is to keep ex-members of the old Waltham Abbey Establishment in touch with each other. To achieve this two things are essential: firstly I need to make sure that the newsletter is circulated as widely as possible; secondly, I must have some news to tell and this is where you, dear reader, come in.

Do you know of any ex-Waltham Abbeyite (EWA) that would like to receive this publication, in fact did you yourself receive this second or third hand? I would like to hear from any of you who have not received, or have not yet responded to the initial introductory leaflet which was widely distributed a few months ago. I am setting up a register of interested people and will print the full list from time to time. This will enable you to see if - a) you are on the list and b) who else is on (or not on) the list.

I can then act as a central point if you wish to renew a lost contact directly, or, you can correspond through these pages if the matter is not too private and personal and does not offend public taste. It's a bit like a dating agency - and it's completely free. Well, it's free at the moment but if the venture takes off it may be necessary to make some nominal subscription charge to cover postage, but that's in the future.

Of course, if we are to make a success of this I must have some news to tell and this is where you all come in. I'm prepared to act as collater, editor, typist, etc etc but you've got to supply the articles. The next edition is scheduled for June 92 and your deadline is mid-May!

Norman Paul

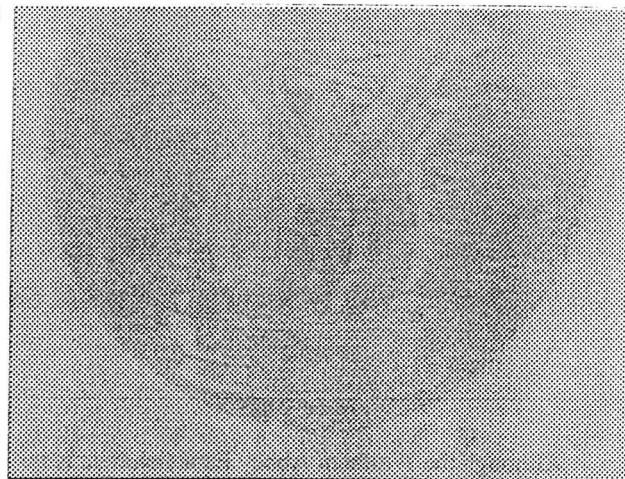
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DISCLAIMER:

As you can see from the masthead the name chosen for this publication is

"Touchpaper"

Many of you suggested titles in your response to the introductory leaflet and the names were presented to Dr Geoff Hooper for an impartial decision. This is the name he has chosen so any complaints should not be directed at the Editor. Actually I think it's a very apt name and our thanks to Michael Sales for the suggestion.

The next step is a:

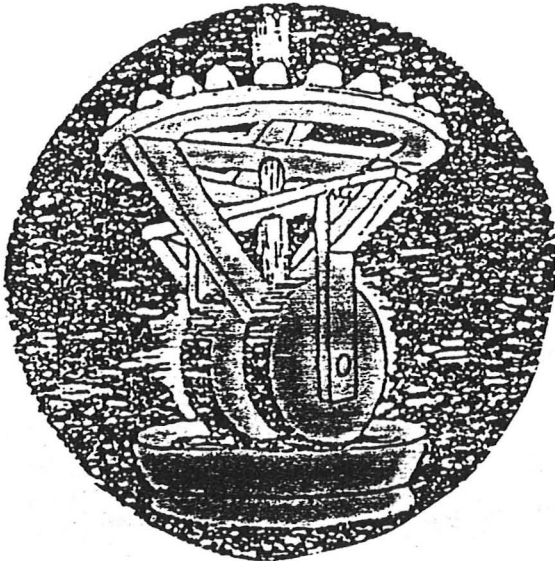
logo competition

The more observant of you will have noticed a blank rectangle above. What we want here is a logo which embodies the title so the first competition in this, the first issue, is to submit a design for a logo which will then appear on subsequent issues.

COMPETITION RULES:

1. Entries must be received by Mid May 1992.
2. No prizes will be awarded.
3. The winning logo will be the one that wins.
4. The Editor reserves the right to modify any entry.

the Powdermill Social Club



Although the Waltham Abbey Establishment is no longer in being it is heartening to know that the Social Club is still in existence on the same premises. A 5 year lease has been negotiated with MOD Lands on very generous terms and the Club is continuing in much the same way as before.

There have been some rule changes necessitated by the changed circumstances; notably the status of the "Associate Members" who now have full voting rights and full involvement in the Club management. With the loss of so many "Establishment Members" it is clear that this step was necessary if the Club was to remain viable.

The present management committee is working hard to ensure that the Club functions efficiently and in the past year there has been a great resurgence in activities. All involved are to be congratulated on their efforts.

Despite these changes the essential nature of the Club is unchanged and if you are in the area why not visit and perhaps renew some old acquaintances.

The Club facilities are still available for special functions such as retirements and reunions. Bill Warren is the current Chairman and any arrangements should be made through him. He can be contacted at RARDE Fort Halstead during working hours (extn 2486).

CLUB CORRESPONDENCE

for information, queries on membership or as another contact point:

The Powdermill Club
Powdermill Lane
Waltham Abbey
ESSEX

Keep In Touch

THE LONDON GROUP

The original suggestion for this newsletter came from an *ad hoc* meeting of a group of EWAs working in London. This group is holding lunchtime "gettogethers" about every three months and generally meet in the Chandos pub, nr. Trafalgar Square. Their next meeting is (was) on March 6th so by the time you read this you've missed it! The next gettogether will probably be on the last Friday in May but if you are really interested please contact Peter (Ike) Eickhoff who purports to work in St. Christopher House

- direct telephone no: 071 - 921 - 2151

(that's if he's in and not already gassing to someone on his phone).

FORT HALSTEAD

The Fort is such a big place (compared to WA) and we have been so well dispersed, presumably in an effort to minimise any disturbance we might cause, that we do not have any formal gettogethers although many small groups do wander down to one of the local hostelrys from time to time. Many of us are also still commuting from over the river each day and that means a longer day which in turn means that most take a short lunchbreak so as to get away early for the journey home. Because of this and because very few live near the Establishment the opportunity for meeting outside working hours is very limited. To go home and then drive back in the evening to the Social Club here is not very attractive. Apart from these drawbacks we do bump into each other from time to time and speak nostalgically of earlier times.

In addition to WA staff a WA tree was also relocated at Fort Halstead - see page 3 for details.

Out Of Touch

WANTED:

Reports from other groups eg. Bridgewater, Chorley, Bishopton, AWE etc.

WHY NOT SET UP YOUR OWN LOCAL GROUP.
DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ANYTHING FORMAL,
JUST TO PROVIDE A CONTACT POINT.

and;
INDIVIDUAL ITEMS FROM THOSE NOW
WORKING IN ISOLATION OR IN RETIREMENT
WILL BE MOST WELCOME.

Old Comrades

The Old Comrades Association is still in existence and meets regularly in the Powdermill Club on the first Thursday of each month. They also have a fairly hectic programme of social events and outings and would be very pleased to welcome all retired members to their ranks. Even if you now live too far away to attend their meetings and functions they will be delighted to hear from you and may be able to put you IN TOUCH with colleagues that you have lost contact with.

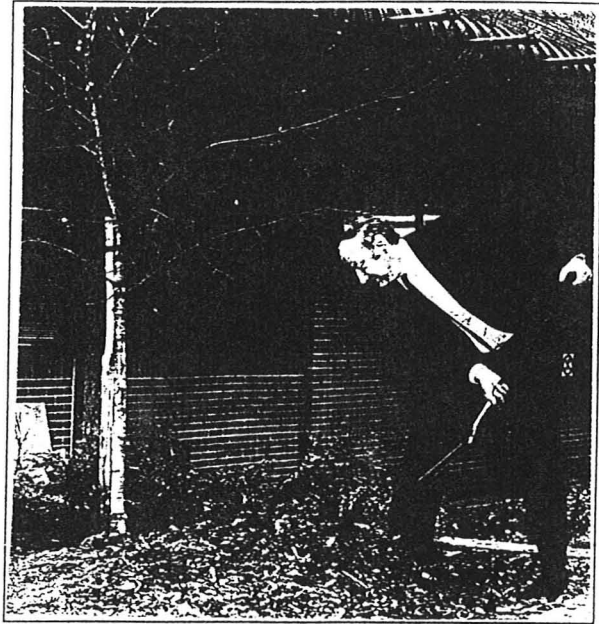
Mention should be made of the sterling job that Alice Negus, Pearl Speller and Len Abbott are doing in keeping the Old Comrades running and if you wish to make direct contact with the Old Comrades just drop a line to any of them.

Contact can be made c/o the Club:

Old Comrades
c/o The Powdermill Club
Powdermill Lane
Waltham Abbey
ESSEX

We hope to bring you further reports from the Association in future issues.

Tree Planting Ceremony at Fort Halstead



In 1987 when WA celebrated it's Bicentenary a tree was planted on the North Site to commemorate the occasion. Since the future of the site is uncertain it was decided that, as well as staff, the tree should be relocated where we could keep an eye on it. The tree, a weeping copper birch (*Betula pendula purpurea*) was replanted outside one of the newly built laboratory blocks (A28) last December. Dr Geoff Hooper officiated at the occasion and was ably assisted by a number of WA expatriates plus a few of the indigenous population.

As Geoffrey said 'let it be a reminder of the spirit of Waltham Abbey - and I hope it doesn't die!.

Pictures by courtesy of the Photographic Section.



A Very Special Occasion

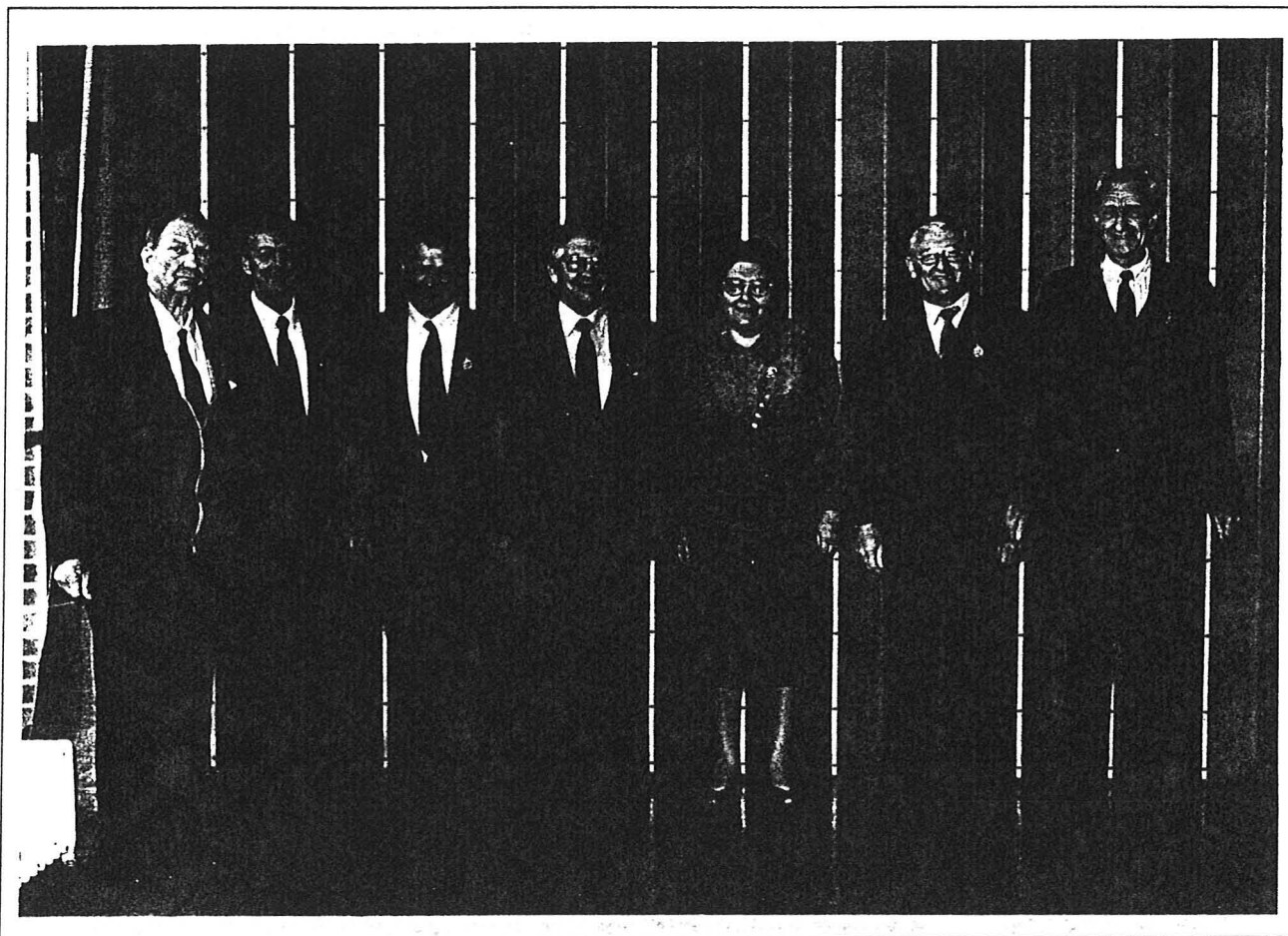
THE IMPERIAL SERVICE MEDAL

There was a welcome return to Waltham Abbey on 6th December last year for a large number of past employees attending a rather special event. Seven of our former colleagues were formally presented with the Imperial Service Medal in recognition of their "long and meritorious service". There was to have been an eighth presentation, to **Alf James**; a personal presentation was made to him two days previously and it is with sadness that we have to report that he died shortly after.

Collectively, those honoured, had served a total of over two hundred years at Waltham Abbey and it is some reflection on the Waltham Establishment that it could inspire the loyalty and dedication given by those honoured.

The medals were presented by Dr Geoff Hooper, representing the last of a long line of Heads of the Establishment. In his introduction Geoff indicated the criteria for the award of the ISM as being not just long but meritorious service and he gave ample illustration of this in his citations on each and every recipient.

After the presentation there there was a general reunion held in the Powdermill Club bar; for a further report on this see page 6.



Left to Right: Ivor Quickendon, Dai Mathias, Ray Adams, Norman Foster, Jean Paddick, Harry Wilson and Jimmy James.

Touch Register

Here is the current list of those who have registered their support for this newsletter:

Steve Boorer	Dave Endicott	Eileen Henshaw	Dave Salter
Gordon Bromberger	Mike Evans	Joan Hills	Mike Sales
Allen Clarke	Davina Evans	Peter Honey	Alan Short
Ron Darby	Ron Fletcher	Steve Hutchings	Malcolm Stewart
Dave Debenham	Eddie Gallacher	Jimmy James	I Weston
Peter Eickhoff	Brian Hammant	Derek Needham	John Wright

and a late entry: Bob Tinniswood

I know the rest of you are out there! It's no use hiding; I'll find you eventually!

Of course, this is only a preliminary register compiled from returns following the introductory leaflet. Please take the trouble to return the registration sheet on the back cover of this newsletter. To make it easier for you it's been designed so that you only have to fill it in, fold it (following the fairly simple instructions) and return it by post. To save on postage, may I suggest that groups of you working together or in constant touch, collect these locally and forward in bulk.

I hope to print a full list of names in the next issue together with your current locations. Look out for your name in print!

COMMUNICATIONS

To assist in the logistics of sending out this newsletter and to reduce postage costs it will help greatly if we can set up a series of distributors at the various establishments now employing groups of EWAs. Volunteers are urgently required, if not, some may be appointed!

Some suggested contact areas:

RO Summerfield	RO Bridgewater
RO Chorley	RO Bishopston
MOD London	AWE
Old Comrades	and any others you know of.

ANY OFFERS?

A Lighter TOUCH

In addition to the more serious aspect of finding out what our ex-colleagues are now doing; historical articles, current affairs, births, marriages etc I hope to be able to bring a laugh, or at least raise a smile to lighten our exile.

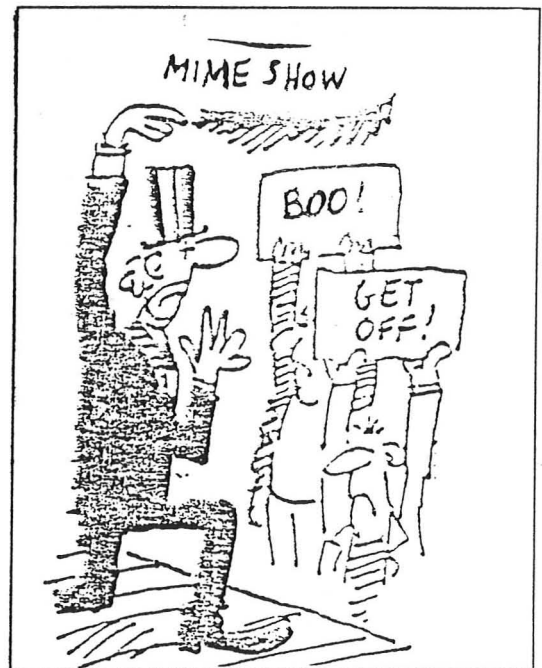
Perhaps we can make this a permanent feature of the newsletter with amusing anecdotes, cartoons or any humorous article you would like to share with us.

Naturally, the editor will be the arbiter of what is suitable for publication and to those of you of a sensitive nature I can only say "trust me". This does mean that we shall NOT be printing any dirty jokes or articles of bad taste although please send them in as I'm sure that I shall enjoy reading them. Of course, my standards may slip from time to time but if anyone is offended then please complain immediately. At least I will know that the newsletter is being read.

I'm frantically trying to think up something to fill up this page for this issue but I see I've still got lots of space left. I am now considering using a bigger typeface but that's cheating so I think I'll go off and see if I can find a cartoon or something

..... Right! I've found a cartoon which is of no particular significance except that I found it amusing.

Let's see if You can come up with anything better!



A Christmas Reunion 1991

As mentioned in the article on the ISM presentation there was a general reunion held in the Club Bar on Friday 6th December. As the lunch hour wore on more and more of our old colleagues arrived and the bar was soon overflowing. It was just like old times! Many old acquaintances were renewed and as a reunion it was an unqualified success. Of course we will not always have the excuse of a medal giving ceremony but the consensus was that this reunion should be repeated this year. Our apologies to those who live so far away but we hope, provided the event is repeated, that at least some of you can find an excuse for the journey. You will be kept informed, through these pages of any future gettogethers. Perhaps some of the larger contingents elsewhere may consider organising local events and issuing a general invitation?
